

Airfare Cost Savings – Best Practices Guide

Purpose The purpose of the Department of General Services' (DGS) *Best Practices Guide* is to provide employees with guidelines and industry standard best practices relative to the establishment of a lowest usable airfare policy. These are recommendations to achieve airfare cost savings.

This guide should be used in conjunction with the Department of General Services Management Memo 14-03 and Executive Order B-06-11.

Lowest Usable Fare Travelers must book the lowest usable airfare whenever possible, considering the following types of fares in order to maximize savings:

- Non-refundable fares—travelers should consider these fares if the trip dates/times are fixed and there is a low probability of a change in plans; this will save 40-60 percent off the cost of a fully refundable fare. Frequent travelers should always consider non-refundable fares since there is a high probability the unused funds will be used for future travel within the expiration period.
- Refundable fares – a refundable ticket may be the best option if plans are likely to change.
- Contracted fares, such as YCAL or Capacity Controlled Fares.
- Southwest Internet fares with state-contracted discount available through the Concur Travel tool.
- Promotional fares offered on the Concur Travel tool or through CalTravelStore.

Consideration of the following parameters and fares will also provide significant cost savings:

- Other Cost-Saving Factors**
- **Routing Options**—Consider taking flights that include stops, so long as these layovers don't significantly impact business or delay travel times. These flights often offer savings of more than \$100.
 - **Flexible Flight Window**—Being flexible with earlier or later departure times can often save significant amounts of money.

**Other Cost
Saving
Factors
(cont.)**

- **Advance purchase**—Select advance purchase fares of seven, 14 and 21 days prior to departure. Planning ahead can save the state up to 50 percent off airline costs.
- **Alternate Airports**—Significant savings can be achieved through the use of close-proximity alternate airports.

Questions

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